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UP GOES THE RENT AGAIN

WHEN IT WAS decided last October that Marylebone council rents would rise by an average of 10% this Spring, tenants' association leaders were prominent in the calls for a complete price freeze. Demonstrations against the planned increases took place, and there was talk of urging Jack Jones, Len Murray, Roy Hattersley, Uncle Tom Cobbley and others to intervene. Local Labour councillor Hegarty, hypocrite that he is, expressed sympathy for the tenants and reminded us through the pages of "The Marylebone Mercury" (December 31st) that the benefits of our sacrifices under Labour are now not far off. (Funny, we seem to have heard that phrase before....) The resistance was to no avail, however: the rises will take effect in April.

The Socialist Party issued a statement on rent at last April's GLC by-election. The following are some of the points we made:

"Labour, Tory and Liberal candidates all pledge themselves to do something about high rents. But what can they do, and what have their predecessors done? The simple answer in both cases is - Nothing. Why? Because the parties who impose the

increases and then oppose them are the same parties.

"You, the electors, are deluding yourselves if you expect to get lasting concessions on rent from Tory, Liberal or Labour. They are not in the giving business, but in the taking business. They represent the class - the capitalists - who own the means of wealth production and the natural resources of society. It is they who own the City of Westminster. They suck the living energy of the worker in the interests of capital. You live with their permission because you are dependent on the capitalist class for wages. Work and wages - that is your future, putting it at its best. Of course, you also have to pay for permission to inhabit the earth - that's what rent represents.

"Has it occurred to you that you should not waste time and energy chasing decreases, or resisting increases in rent? This is a futile exercise - it has achieved nothing in the past and will achieve nothing in the future. You are involved in the same never-ending struggle.... WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN SUBSIDISING POVERTY, BUT IN ABOLISHING IT. THAT'S WHAT SOCIALISM IS ALL ABOUT!"

